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Long-time Atlanta Braves pitching star John Smoltz wrote the forward to my first book. This past Wednesday he did something that no one else may do this year: He beat Tiger Woods at something. On Wednesday, Smoltz took to the mound to face Tiger during Braves spring training. Woods stepped into the batter's box wearing a batting helmet and a Braves jersey tucked into his shorts. Smoltz struck out Woods twice, walked him once and allowed a "controversial" single.

Tim Simpson led after the first round of the Champions Tour Toshiba Classic last week. Not bad for this walking miracle who underwent brain surgery three years ago to implant an electrode that helps control Parkinson's-like shaking in his left hand. Simpson has a hole in his head where the electrode was implanted, a wire that runs through his neck and into his chest, where it is attached to a power pack – what Simpson calls "a generator." "I'm grateful to be playing," he said. "I shouldn't be playing any more. The fact that I am able to play again and to compete is really remarkable." Just being able to play again is a miracle, but to shoot a score that leads an event, priceless!

Gary Player is 72 and still going strong with his trademark flat stomach. When he signed an autograph for a 10-year-old boy he told him to make sure he took up golf. "It's the only sport you can do forever," he lectured, gently. "Those others – basketball, football – you're done when you're 30." So how did he play in the first round at Toshiba? "I shot one over my age," he said, "and I three-putted four greens."

Defending Masters champion Zach Johnson did the winner's conference call this week. It was great hearing him review last year's rounds, especially what turned out to be his winning strategy on the par-five holes. "There are four par-five holes at 7,445-yard Augusta National, and in four rounds last year, I played them in 11-under par, utilizing an un-aggressive strategy. I laid up all 16 times. I play three wedges – 60-degree, a 54-degree and a 48-degree. It was sound strategy that probably won't change."

Think about his four-round total score and you realize he had to play all the other holes in a combined 12 over. Can he do that again? "I think it becomes imperative to score well on those other holes," he said. "Now, for me, I've got to score well on the par fives. The course is so long and it has become very much an approach-shot golf course in my opinion, that the more wedges I can get in my hands the better off I can score."

Arnold Palmer assures me Bay Hill's greens are just fine and ready to go this week for his annual Arnold Palmer Invitational. The King always comes through!



SST Wins on Both Tours

Boom, Boom! And just like that, SST explodes with success and picks up two more victories. Sean O'Hair won this week on the PGA Tour and Bernhard Langer won on the Champions, and both players have a history of having SST PURE their clubs. Now SST PURE has eight victories in the bank already and we're only in early March.

O'Hair started the day in fifth place at the PODS Championship but put together a two-under round on the brutal Inverness course, which has played the toughest of any course so far this season on the PGA Tour. But the former rookie of the year and had plenty of company from other SST players who turned in great performances this week to finish in the top 20: Stuart Cink had another top-two finish and Brant Snedeker, who had his first clubs PURED last year, finished in the top 10.

Then comes a name we haven't seen much of lately – Lee Janzen. The two-time U.S. Open Champion showed why he believes his game is back and finished tied for 10th.

Speaking of "Boom Boom," do you remember the days when Fred Couples went by that nickname? As you know Fred is now the U.S. President's Cup captain. He also had some clubs PURED when the SST PURE Shaft Alignment Lab was parked with the rest of the equipment vans at Inverness during the PODS Championship. Fred has had clubs SST PURED for years, and if the last President Cup is any indication of what the future holds, virtually all the other players on both teams will be playing with PURED clubs too.

Every week players ask SST to PURE their new clubs. This week besides Couples some of the star names that had clubs PURED included Jim Furyk, J.J. Henry, Peter Lonard, Jonathan Byrd, and young star Nick Flanagan.

Eight victories already this year. The world's best players have their shafts PURED weekly as they put new clubs in play ... so what are you waiting for? Check out www.sstpure.com to find the local licensee nearest you.

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